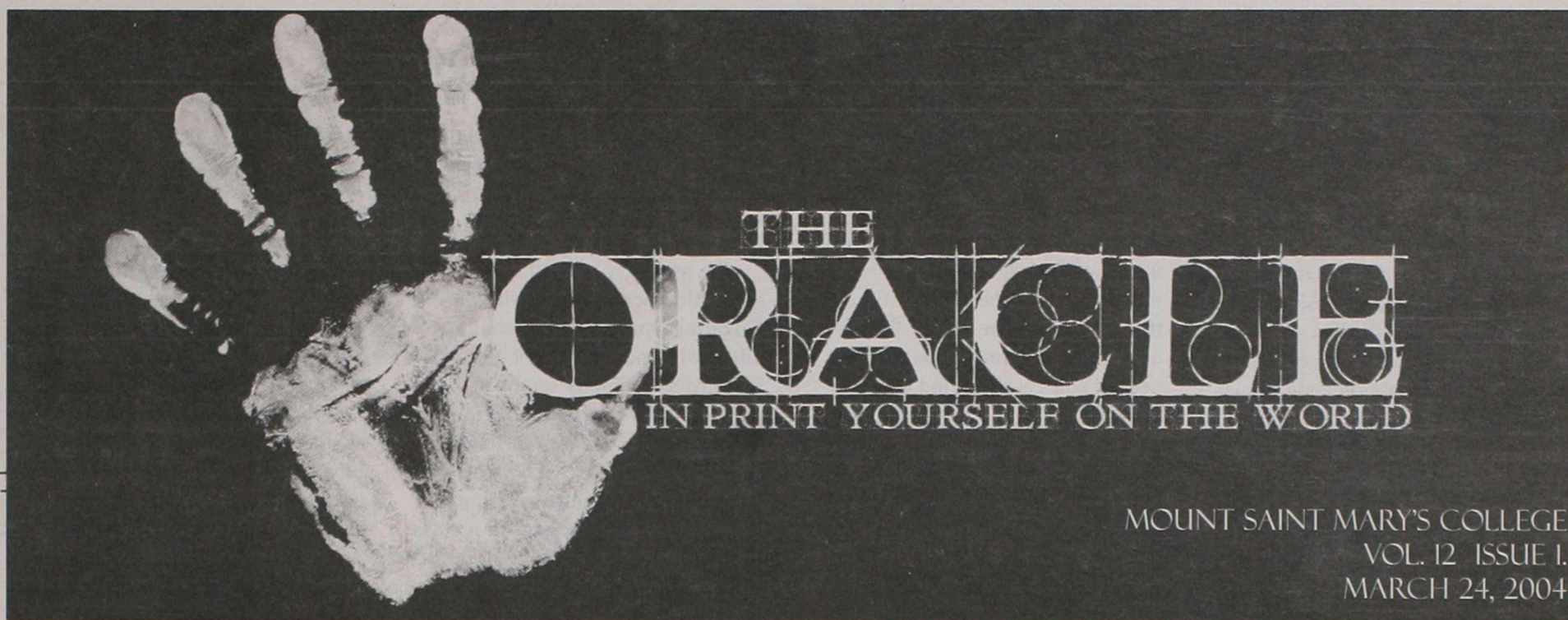




Prop 57: Will Borrowing \$15 Billion End California's Accumulated Debt?

By Andrea Mazon

Of the four bond measures on the March 2nd ballot, Proposition 57 has created perhaps the greatest uproar. This is especially true among college students as well as the middle and lower-income voting populations. Although most hold strong, if not unwavering opinions about 57, many are unfamiliar with its details.

The onetime economic recovery bond of \$15 billion would be used to combat California's accumulated general fund deficit. Governor Schwarzenegger, along with his most staunch supporters - among them Sen. Dianne Feinstein and the California Republican Party - has touted Prop 57 as the only way for California to rectify its current economic crisis. The bond may indeed pay off the deficit, but also require \$1.2 billion in annual payments over a nine to fourteen year period

to fully repay the borrowed billions.

In order to amass the funds necessary to pay for the bond, Prop 57 calls for the allocation of a percentage of the sales tax. \$1.2 billion of this will have been extracted from existing services and would divert funds not only from health care, but also funding for education at all levels.

In regard to the funding and subsidizing of higher education, the provisions for the Cal Grant will be significantly altered. In terms of new student qualifications for the grant, the current income ceiling will be lowered by 10%. Those independent college and university students who do qualify will experience a 44% reduction in the funds awarded. Instead of \$9,708 for the academic year, recipients will receive \$5,482.

Gov. Schwarzenegger is so certain of 57's ability to clear the economic air that he has spent a reported \$10 million on ads aimed at garnering voter support. These millions are the result of private and corporate donations, as well as contributions accumulated at various funding raising events, including one in New York City.

There have been no formal oppositional ads or other concrete resources presented to the voting public. Opposition does however exist in the persons of the State Treasurer Phil Angelides and Sen. Tom McClintock, and organizations such as the San Diego based Association of Concerned Taxpayers, among others.

Will borrowing \$15 billion cure California's debt crisis? Only time will tell.

Guest Writer Visits Campus:

Chris Abani



Read about his visit to Chalon on page 8

Moot

The Life and Times of a Mock Trial Groupie:

An Autobiography

What?

By Sarah Bessell

"Mock Trial." You've heard it bandied around campus: that group of merry women learning to fight the good fight; armed with quick wit, the appropriate legal jargon, massive strategy binders, and an endless supply of yellow legal pads. Just who are these people and what are they up to every Tuesday night from 6:15 to 9:15 on the second floor of Humanities? What motivated them to sacrifice not one, but two semesters of time, energy, and overall sanity? Now that I've sat down to write the article, I find it rather hard to put into words the emotions and experiences that make up Moot Court/ Mock Trial. However, there's no time like the present and I'll find a way.

The girls in the Mock Trial class signed up with a variety of motivations, but we can all concur that each of us has an interest in the field of law and wanted to know what it was like to actually put all the information that we had learned into practice. The first half of the fall semester found the group diving into the Moot Court process. This style of litigation is reserved for the appellate court level, the most significant being the Supreme Court. Here we studied the law and engaged in spirited legal debate. We sought to defend or prosecute Ms. Mary Hacker, convicted of murdering her

estranged husband and appealing her case on the grounds of an unfair trial proceeding. Our heroes were Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Thurgood Marshall; we were legal intellectuals and debate aficionados.

In the second half of the semester the course switched gears and we found ourselves in the mystical, magical world of trial litigation. Here our references were Johnnie Cochran and *Law and Order*. It was time to put on a show of smoke and mirrors; we radiated confidence and could take on the world with our handy list of Objections. During Moot Court we were all lawyers, in Mock Trial we had to learn how to handle the legal battle and how to be appropriate character witnesses. This time we met the defendant Michael Harmon, a man involved in the death of fellow hockey player Tony Sturmanis: accident or murder? Add to this the fact that we would be leaving our safe haven of the Mount and arguing our case at the Regional Mock Trial Competition on February 21 and 22, 2004.

This time the stakes were higher, we not only wanted to achieve personal satisfaction in our performance but, as the first Mount St. Mary's Mock Trial team ever, we wanted to show the rest of Southern California that we could tough

Continued on Page 8

Fashion Show Pictures

Special Section-Pages 4-5



IN



SIDE THIS ISSUE

Opinion Page 2

Fashion Show
Pictures

Page 4

Entertainment

Page 6

Student Views

Page 7

The Great Poster Scandal...

A new semester brought much more to the Oracle office than an issue deadline. Many fresh faces, a new Editor, and a strong core of returning staff provided a fertile environment for discussion about issues on campus. We seemed to almost immediately settle on politics. While we all agreed that we needed to cover events on campus (the Fashion Show, Moot Court, etc.) we also decided that it was time to explore the mysterious issue of politics on campus. What do Mount students think? Are they generally liberal, as many believe? How do they feel about our new governor, the presidential race, and the new budget proposals? How informed are they? And, perhaps most importantly, do they care?

Our meetings became debates, but less about the politics themselves, and more about the students. Some argue that our student body is generally

informed and hold varying political views; others argue that they are homogenously liberal, and still others that they don't care at all. What was unanimously agreed upon was that we needed some way to find out.

A first thought was to interview someone in the political science department about what they felt was the political atmosphere on campus. The response, however, was that we should go to the source: find some way to ask the students.

A new idea arose that the staff quickly became excited about: what if we posted an image, something that would make people react, and ask for comments? In light of the recent budget proposal (which would significantly cut educational funding, see Budget), and the recent spectacle surrounding the recall elections, we decided an appropriate image would be our own Governor

Schwarzenegger.

We promptly created a poster for the Little Theater Foyer with the Governor's picture and posted it, along with markers, for comment. It was just as promptly removed, however, by individuals who obviously do not respect our school's posting policy (the poster was approved and cannot be removed without permission by the Oracle or the Student Activities Office). But, in lieu of an all out investigation, we decided instead to simply re-post the image.

Our determination paid off, and the poster was a great success. The comments it garnered were varied and, for the most part, direct.

It seems that we were, to some extent, successful in our search for the political climate on campus. While this is only the beginning, we are excited to have had such a promising result, and look forward to

delving even deeper into the passions of the students, and getting an even better idea of what you think. We welcome, and encourage comments however you wish to give them: you can reach the oracle through email at Oracle@msmc.la.edu, and, if you see another poster, please comment. Finally, if you have something to say, we always welcome contributing articles/opinion pieces. Just let us know. And remember, the Oracle is your paper and whether it is through comments on a poster, a letter to the editor, or an article, we encourage you to see yourself in print.

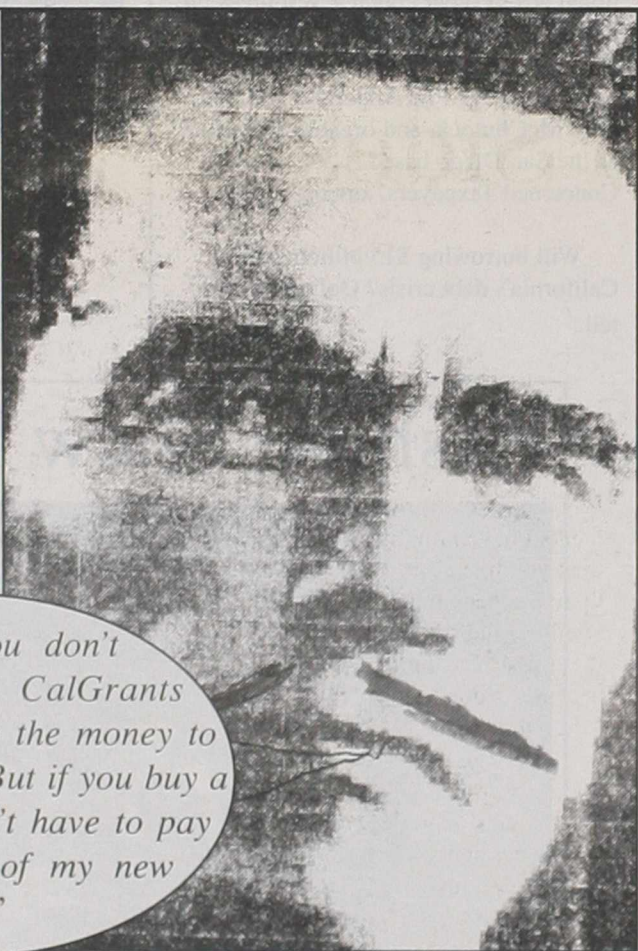
Erica Carroll
Editor-in-Chief

What Do You Think?

"This guy is worthless! He wants, or more like is going to take away half of the CalGrant. Did you know that? He is not considering education at all. Stupid Arnold, he should get terminated!"

"Some of you got sucked in by the Terminator. Now you're suffering..."

"I hope you don't need your CalGrants because I'm using the money to cover the deficit. But if you buy a new car, you won't have to pay taxes because of my new tax credit."



"This is what you get for not voting."

"Vote! I need money for this school!"

"Deport him!"

"What happened to being qualified to be involved in politics?"

"I love him!"

"He is a puppet." "A loser politician."

"This is what happens when you marry well"

"Don't I make this look good?"

"Only because he is a good movie star, it does not mean he is a good politician!"

The Controversy Over CalGrants

(Or The Controversy Over The Poster)

Last month, the Oracle staff posted a picture of Governor Schwarzenegger on the wall in the Little Theater Foyer. Included in this section are the comments and opinions expressed by those students and staff who chose to write comments on the poster and add the controversial horns and mustache (for more opinions, see page 3).

THE ORACLE

oracle@msmc.la.edu

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Erica Carroll

LAYOUT EDITORS

Jenny Kane

Tiare Kaolelopono

ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Adriana Rendon-Miranda

STAFF WRITERS

Marisa Smith

Sarah Bessell

Laarni Paras

Andrea Mazon

Maureen Kelley

Dara Helperin

FACULTY ADVISOR

Dr. Matthew Brosamer

Editorial Policy

The Oracle is a non-profit publication created by the students of Mount Saint Mary's College. Letters to the Editor are strongly encouraged. All letters should be accompanied by full name and signature and may be edited for clarity and brevity. Unsigned letters will not be printed. Please direct all correspondence to The Oracle at 12001 Chalon Road, Box 112, Los Angeles, CA 90049 or via e-mail to oracle@msmc.la.edu. The telephone number is (310) 954-4083. Advertisements, commentaries, columns and political cartoons do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the paper, the college or the writer. Editorials are the opinions of the majority of the editorial staff. The Oracle welcomes articles and contributions by students, faculty, staff and alumni.

Hell Hath No Fury

Dear Editor:

I just walked through the fourth floor hall out into the weekend college patio, and I am absolutely, ferociously furious.

There is a poster of Arnold Schwarzenegger taped to the wall and some people have written comments on it. And some ignoramus has drawn a Hitler-style moustache and devil horns on his face. (See picture, page 2)

I cannot believe that anyone at this school has the audacity to compare Schwarzenegger's proposed budget cuts to the horrors that occurred at the hands of Adolf Hitler. How disgusting. Is this what Mount students do when they don't get their way? I'm embarrassed to be a student at this college if this is how my cohorts think and conduct themselves. What is the matter with you people? Are you trying to tell me that you are getting *this* crazy just because the Cal Grant program might be reduced?

Look, ladies — our state has spent way too much money on non-vital expenses. You can blame whomever you like (George Bush is the predictable scape-goat), but the point is that we have no money to fund some of the services we used to take for granted. Let's all accept the fact that anyone's college tuition

being subsidized by the state cannot even remotely be considered a crucial expense, and if the state can't offer students as much financial assistance as it once did, that's just too damn bad. It's really nice that you've been getting that Cal Grant, but the well hath run dry, and now (gasp) people just might have to pay their own way, earn other scholarships, take out a loan, or postpone school.

Taxes are collected to pay for essential services like the infrastructure, police and firemen, public schools, etc. Anything else the budget can cover is a bonus, not an entitlement! Do you realize that if Schwarzenegger decides not to reduce the amount of money going to Cal Grants that some *other* social service is going to get *their* funding cut? Everyone takes a hit when expenditures exceed revenue, which is why it's important to decide which programs are truly indispensable and which serve only as conveniences to some sector of the population. There is simply not enough capital to make everyone happy and to fully fund everyone's pet cause. I realize it's a bummer when you learn that, a) the world does not revolve around you and owes you nothing, and b) you can't always get what you want — but come on! Part of the college experience is learning about real life — so

welcome to it.

What do you do when you realize your household budget needs to be reduced? You decide what you can live without and stop paying for it, right? Not always fun, but nonetheless necessary. You stop getting manicures, you fire the babysitter, you cut back on the amount you spend on food, and you cancel the vacation. That is essentially what Schwarzenegger is being forced to do at this point. Anyone who is bitching about the Cal Grant being cut back is like the bratty, greedy child that whines about not being able to go to Disneyland when the family can barely afford to pay rent. Let's have some perspective here. Hospitals are priorities. A Cal Grant is a handout that should only be available when more fundamental needs are adequately met and there is a surplus of money to cover the expense.

I recognize that my opinion is not going to be a popular one. After all, I do not receive a Cal Grant (although the mega taxes my family pays finance everyone else's), and I am more than a little turned-off by anyone who believes they deserve money that someone else has worked hard to earn. But the impression that I get is that many students at

this school feel entitled to the gift of financial aid, and overlook the fact that someone is indeed paying the price for it. A decent person does not become angry when a friend or family member is no longer financially able to give them gifts — why on Earth is it okay to get mad at the government for the same unfortunate circumstance?

Sincerely-

Maureen Kelley

MAURKELL@MSMC.LA.EDU



Do Coins Have Two Sides?

Dear Editor:

I've always said that more of today's youth needs to be aware of the political issues that affect their everyday lives, well thank you Governor Schwarzenegger. With the proposed \$30-million dollar cut in the Cal Grants Program the campus is predictably up in arms about the issue, and well it should be. The cut is expected to significantly impact those students wishing to receive a college education at a private institution, as well as the institutions themselves. Mt. Saint Mary's is no exception and it is estimated that the school will lose approximately \$400,000 in state aid next year.

The students and the administration are doing their part to fight back: the Student Activities & Commuter Services office has sponsored petitions that will make their way to the state's capitol; two students—Florence Flores and Jessica Langford—were sent as a special envoy from the college to meet with state senators and assembly members and persuade them to oppose the reduction; discussion and debate can be heard throughout the hallowed halls of Humanities.

It is on this note that I feel inclined to pause for a moment to address the arguments that have left the students in such a political fervor. In most cases there are two sides to the coin, and in this particular debate two defenses reoccur. Many have argued that the Cal Grant is not an entitlement or a gift, that it is a privilege, and that the naysayers should be quiet and start searching for private scholarships. While there is legitimacy to parts of this argument, to label those against

the reductions in a way that brushes them off as recalcitrant children is unnecessary and unwise. According to the *Los Angeles Times* a third of the Mount's undergraduates come from families that earn less than \$25,000 a year, how can we blame them for feeling upset over the loss of state aid when they attend an institution that costs roughly \$20,000 *without* room and board?

In 1992 the Supreme Court ultimately ruled against overturning abortion rights established under *Roe v. Wade*, stating that "Women had relied for two decades on the availability of abortion...[and that] the cost of overruling *Roe* for people who have relied on the decision... cannot be dismissed." I mention this, because the reasoning applied by the Supreme Court can likewise be applied to the current Cal Grant situation. Cal Grants are given to students who wish to attend a private college, often these students are seeking the specific and intimate style of learning that they would not find at a large state university or community college. To cut these students off requires a great and painful cost of which the state legislators must be especially mindful. Yes, it will ease the budget problem, but meanwhile hundreds of students will lose the chance to receive the college education of their choice. The students receiving these grants are not spoiled or overly needy; they have applied for this aid with the specific purpose of funding a quality education that they might otherwise not be able to afford. State legislators must carefully weigh the costs and the benefits before making any decisive actions.

To those students who oppose the bill I say this: be mindful of the manner in which you argue for your cause. If you act like a spoiled child whose lollipop has been taken away, then those whose arguments I have previously addressed will treat you like a spoiled child whose lollipop has been taken away. When asking a fellow student to sign a petition against the reductions, do not ask them to do so because "I don't want to lose my grant." While these cuts largely affect the recipients of the grants, others will be impacted in the aftermath as well. It's not just about you, so don't be selfish.

As mentioned earlier, the Mount will lose approximately \$400,000 dollars as a result of the Cal Grant cuts. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, President Doud remarked that "a private college just can't say, 'Oh, by the way, you have to pay a couple extra thousand or hundred'... many students don't have that kind of money." When I applied to the Mount about \$8 million a year was given away in financial aid and 93% of the student population received this aid. Suffice to say, the college is big on helping out its students. However, the money has to come from somewhere and that somewhere is mostly donors. \$8 million is quite the pretty penny and the school is continually hard-pressed to raise its annual goal, compounding this difficulty with the Cal Grant cuts does not bode well.

If the school wishes to maintain the amount of aid it dispenses—and I, for one, heartily hope that the administration will—and the difficulty in recruiting donations remains, then the college will

quite possibly have to look into rearranging its budget. This is where I'm talking to those who flip the channel when the news discusses the Cal Grant issue because, "It doesn't affect me, so why should I care?" Well it does.

"Rearranging the budget" is a vague term, it can mean anything and the possibilities are endless. Everyone in the community will undoubtedly be affected, Cal Grant recipient or not.

It's a good lesson in political activism as well. This issue should teach us to pay more attention during election time, because not getting involved is as bad as voting for the wrong person and, as we are unfortunately aware, it will boomerang right back at us with unpleasant results. In the end "what will be, will be" but hopefully we all will have learned.

Sincerely-

Sarah Bessell

ORACLE@MSMC.LA.EDU

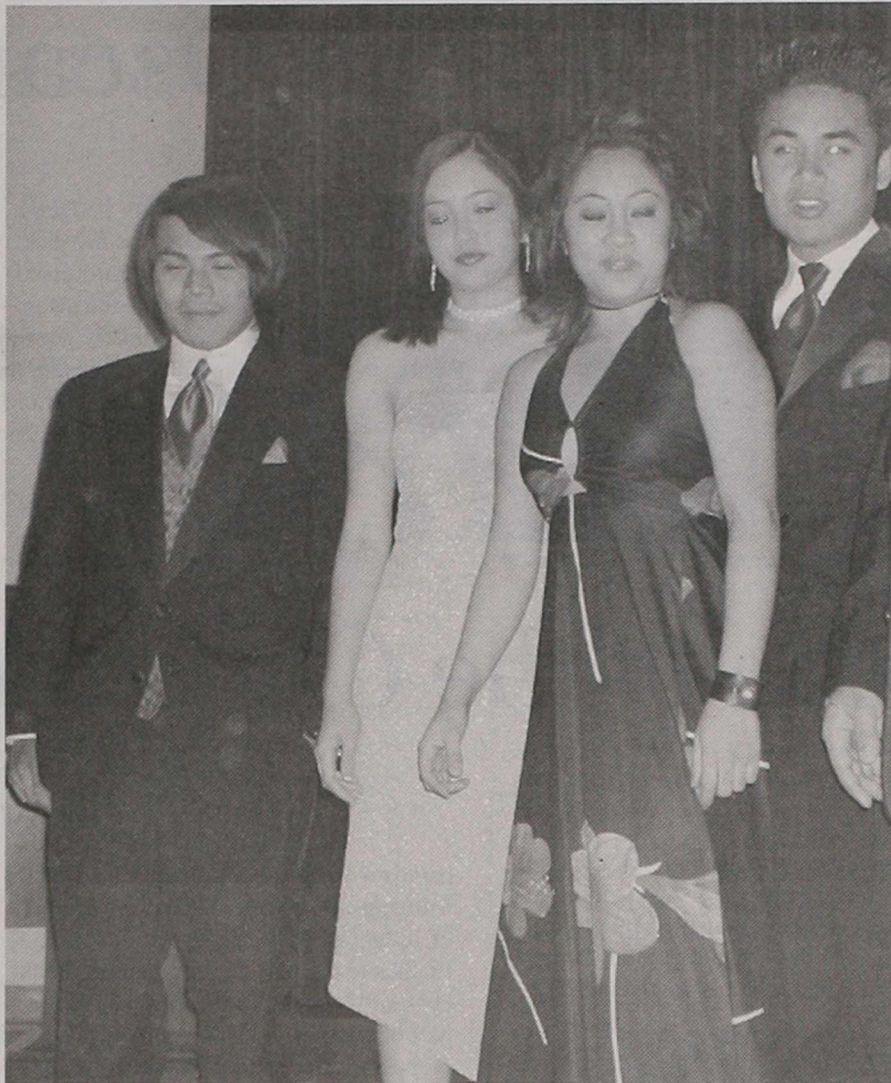


*Fashion
Show 2004:
A Little
Glitz*

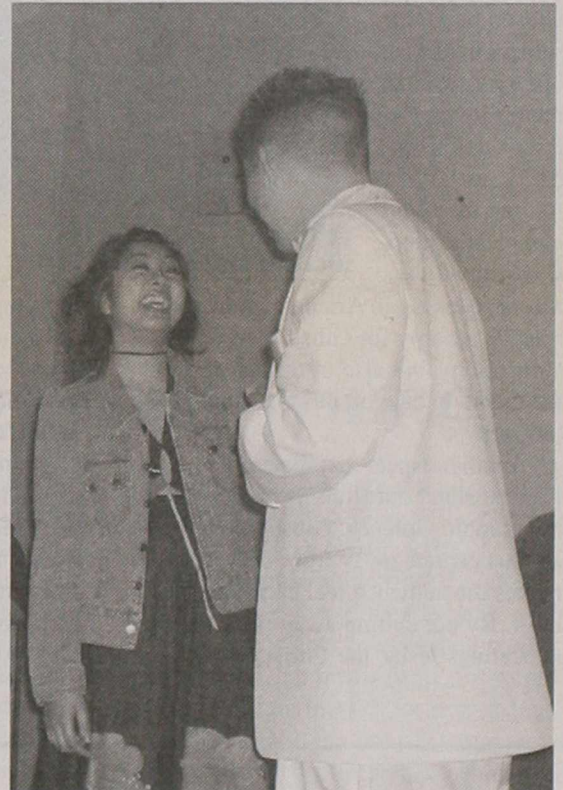


*Congrats
FASA-Raffle
Winners 2004!*

*February
12th,
2004
Little
Theater
Chalon
Campus
9:00
P.M.*



*Congrats
to All
The
Models
and
Escorts!*



All Dolled Up: The Oscars 2004

By: Adriana Rendon-Miranda

There is only one man's name that can get tinsel town to put on their best and look fabulous! This man, or shall I say, gold statue, would not be called by any other name, but Oscar. The red carpet was rolled out and along that long walkway, some of Hollywood's brightest stars strutted their stuff to be asked by the fashion diva reporter Joan Rivers, "Who are you wearing?" My pick of the evening for best dressed female, has to go to Naomi Watts of "21 Grams," hands down, who

wore a Versace strapless golden beaded gown that flowed lovely and the best accessory that Naomi had was not the bling-bling she wore, but the eye

candy that accompanied her arm named



clean sweep for numerous awards for

Heath Ledger. As for my pick for best dressed male, the award definitely goes to Peter Jackson, the director of "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King." Although Jackson won a

"Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King," he needs to return to a spa and get groomed. Jackson always looks frumpy and this occasion sure did not inspire him to get it together. You would think with all the money that man has, he would at least go get a hair cut. Another Academy Awards passes and we will just have to stay tuned next year for more glitz and glam!

The Passion of the Christ: A Review

By: Laarni Paras

The movie that caused controversy before it was released to the public. The movie that sold out whole weekends in theaters. The movie that was labeled anti-Semitic and anti-anti-Semitic at the same time. The Passion of the Christ.

How does Mel Gibson paint this subject matter any different than the other directors and their versions of the Gospels? Well, for one the film is completely subtitled with all the

actors speaking in Aramaic and Latin. It speaks not only for Gibson's need for authenticity, but also of the effort of all the actors to take on these ancient tongues.

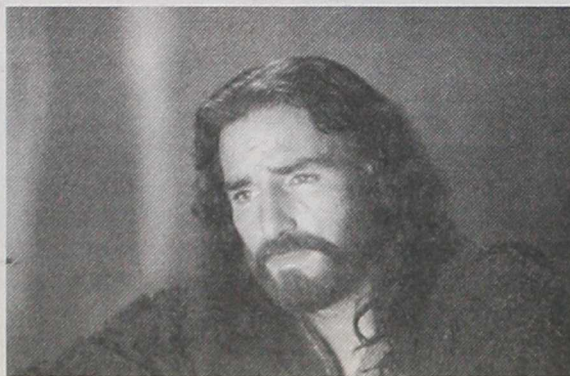
Another aspect that makes The Passion stand out from its predecessors is the graphic violence. Gibson does not shy his camera away from the torture but makes the audience feel each painful blow. By not cutting away from the actual beatings Jesus, the Christ, takes,

Gibson makes the situation felt, rather than merely observed. Also adding to the violent aspect is the portrayal of the Roman soldiers as bloodthirsty brutes - the kind that took joy in gladiatorial

brawls - who take pleasure in scourging Jesus. Of course, some may argue that the violence is excessive, but the use of it is not exploited in

a fictionalized way like Kill Bill Vol. 1, but rather, it emphasizes the realism into what the brutal act of crucifixion was and what the Christ had to sacrifice to endure this pain.

From the lighting, that makes the scenes look like paintings come alive (the scene when Jesus is taken off the cross makes the perfect Pieta) to the dizzying first person views of Jesus' stumbling to the ground, The Passion is a beautiful film to watch. It also helps to



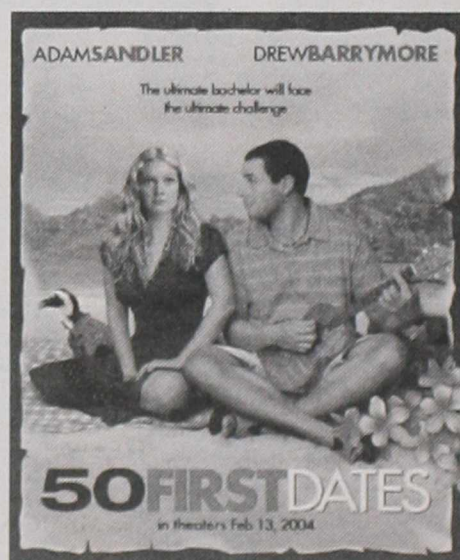
have a wonderfully executed cast. Maia Morgenstern portrays Mary, the Mother of Jesus, with a face stripped of color (thanks to the part of good make-up), but eyes laid with expression (thanks to the part of good acting). She embodies a mother's sorrow and pain when she sees her son suffers. Much like his character, Jim Caviezel suffered along with his character while filming: injured by a dislocated shoulder from carrying the cross, scarred by a whip when the soldiers missed his protective covering, and, if that was not enough, struck by a bolt of lightning. Besides deserving the Actor's Endurance Award, Caviezel disappears into the role of Jesus, adopting not only foreign tongues but also adopting the demeanor of a quiet man who accepts his

arduous fate. And the androgynous figure, played by Rosalinda Celentano, provides the perfect creepy incarnation of Satan.

The story is well acted, well shot and well directed. With the story surrounding itself mostly in the last moments of Jesus' life, there are scenes which provide refuge from the brutality and depict Jesus' message of love; Jesus saving Magdelene, breaking bread with his disciples, and a poetic scene where Mary picks up him up as a child. The Passion of the Christ seems to touch many pious viewers, but a word of caution to those unfamiliar with the Gospels: although there is a sprinkling of Jesus' life pre-condemnation, do not expect a cup of instant theology.

The First Date

By: Adriana Rendon-Miranda



Ahh, the first date, you get dressed up to go out with that new person and then comes the awkwardness of your first date, but can you imagine going on 50 first dates? In the new romantic comedy, "50 First Dates," that is climbing the box offices, Adam Sandler stars as a veterinarian that meets a free spirited island girl (Drew Barrymore), who just so happens to lose her short-term memory. The chemistry that Sandler and Barrymore have on screen is undeniable. We saw it in "The Wedding Singer" and we can see it again in "50 First Dates." The movie takes place in the ever so bright, happy, and romantic

state of Hawaii. Sandler's witty and sick comedy keeps audiences laughing, but they also fall in love with him because of his relentless efforts to win the heart of Lucy. There are many appearances by Sandler's buddies who have appeared in many of his movies, such as Rob Schneider, who plays Sandler's wacky buddy that always has funny things to say and do. Sandler and Barrymore heat up the screen with both romance and laughs, so I would definitely recommend this movie.

Are Ugg Boots an Uh-Oh?

By: Adriana Rendon-Miranda

With winter behind us and spring creeping up on us like the sun peeking through the clouds, I wonder,

"What's the sudden popularity with Ugg Boots and is it that cold to wear Uggs in Southern California?" I know, I know, it does get cold here, but not as cold as somewhere where Uggs originated in Australia where they are said to be "anti fashion" or where they are faithfully worn during the Sundance Film Festival held each year in Utah. The trend of Uggs has spread like wildfire. We open up US Weekly and what do we see? Pamela Anderson and other celebrities alike wearing Uggs. So why do we wear them? Is it because celebrities wear them and/or are we really that cold that

we need are feet bundled up? I asked two girls in the computer lab if they

owned Ugg Boots and one said she did. When asked why she owned them she replied, "Because they are comfortable and are in fashion." Don't get me wrong, Uggs are cute and warm, but how warm can a person be when they are wearing them with close to nothing on? Most girls I see wearing them have them accompanied with an Abercrombie and Fitch sexy short white mini skirt that falls right below their rear and an 80's off the shoulder shirt that says something like FCUK (French Connection). My final say:

Uggs are not an uh-oh if worn properly!



Prepare Your Pajamas

By Dara Halperin

Pajama bottoms and slippers don't offend me. I don't choose to wear them in my car, in the classroom or the supermarket. But that doesn't mean that lots of people don't. I've seen plenty of women in curlers at 7-11. I've also seen a lot of MSMC students in pj's around campus and in class. It seems to come up in conversations and people generally land in one of three camps: the 'it's inappropriate and disrespectful' clique, the 'we love the freedom to be comfy' clan, and the 'I can't believe we're talking about it, who cares anyway?' group. I think they've all missed the point.

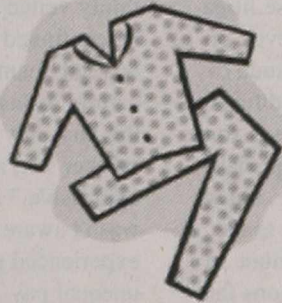
In a college environment, casual is the usual dress for students. How and by whom casual is interpreted is where there seems to be some issue. If an instructor thinks pj's and slippers inappropriate, it should be listed in the syllabus somewhere near the please don't eat your lunch during class announcement and any other requests of the instructor. Students should respect any and all of these requests. However, if pajama-wearing students do not bother an instructor, then I don't see the problem. If a student doesn't like it, well, tough. The thought of someone dictating the way your peers dress for any reason is scary to me. Where does it stop? What will be next? Will we all be told we can't wear sweatpants? Then are sweatshirts ok? What if

they say MSMC? Who will get to decide? Will that be the end of it? How do you know? Are these questions scaring you? If not, they should.

It is far more disrespectful, to students and instructors, to show up for class unprepared than to show up in pj's. A student who wears Sponge Bob Squarepants pj's and has not only read the assigned material but can participate and share their ideas seems far more preferable to have in class than a well-groomed, professionally dressed student who is not prepared and has nothing to add. I have no problem with what you look like, what really matters is what you have to say or what you are curious about.

College campuses have a longstanding tradition of not being in the

realm of your parents and high school hall monitor or the professional/business world. It is that gray area where life lets you choose, truly for the first time, how you will present yourself to the world. This is not something that should be dictated or even suggested. This is a time to discover who you are, inside and out. College should and does provide for a 'testing grounds' to find what works for you in diverse areas of your life. This is not to say that college is for finding your fashion sense, but to say that it is for 'finding' in general.



Human Rights Film Festival In Brief: Juvies

By Marisa Smith

The latest film presented for the Human Rights Film Festival, in cooperation with the Human Rights Watch was *Juvies*, a look at the newest threat facing our generation, the imprisonment of children in an adult facility. Throughout the documentary, directed by Leslie Neale, with scenes captured by the juvenile offenders, the audience sees the world of imprisonment through the eyes of children, forced to mature way before their time.

It is heartbreaking to see how, one by one, each juvenile is sent to an adult facility; albeit, their crimes are adult in nature, ranging from carjacking to murder. By the same token, many of these kids have a poor to nonexistent home life, leading them to runaway or seek their family environment with other wayward teens, thus complicating the way they emotionally mature and learn to make rational, non-impulsive decisions. Throughout the film, each of the offenders profiled was sent away to an adult prison where they would remain for the majority of their life, although none was fully aware of the impact and consequences of their actions. Most could not even grasp the concept of thirty-five years, the amount of time before some would first be eligible for parole.

It seems that the genesis for the early imprisonment of these children lies within the enhancement laws that are sup-

posed to protect the general public from malicious repeat offenders. Instead, these enhancement laws seem to encapsulate the teens who are first time offenders and most likely do not belong to a gang, but rather, are friends with gang members, who live in the vicinity of their neighborhood.

After the presentation of the film, it was the students' turn to take action. The audience was treated to guests that were previously imprisoned, and are now free, one of whom chose to further her education by entering college and seems to be prospering. While it may seem easy to jump on into college, many of these kids are rejected on the basis of their imprisonment. For the other teens in the film who were not as lucky as to be released, they are living life on the inside, and for that matter, getting used to the idea of living life forever on the inside. It's a sad fact, but for most of the kids in the film, their childhood, and teenage years will have long gone by before they are even up for parole.

So the problem then becomes, what do we do about the injustice that is being done to our peers? Even if they are released, many are rejected from jobs or educational institutions, therefore, how do we continue to educate the teens when they are denied one of their most basic rights, the right to learn?

Water Bottle Mania Amounts to More Waste

By Jenny Kane

The debate over bottled water versus tap continues, and as I am perpetually vexed to see the numbers of plastic containers tossed after a mere sixteen ounces of pure mountain spring enjoyment, questions mount in my mind. First, what is the appeal of carrying water in such form? Is it the convenience of having an easily accessible source of refreshment? Sure, I can see that, especially as it pertains to other sectors of the beverage industry. Coca-Cola, Pepsi and other beverage companies advertise to no end, trying to convince consumers of the need for their products. The appeal is to the consumer in each of us. Not only are we sporting Nike and Abercrombie logos, but we are walking around carrying branded bottles of water, which also portray fresh colors and exciting new slogans: "is it in you?" or "Is it bottled at the source?" Ultimately, however, we must consider the costs.

The green response advocates to the counter with the argument that "clearly, some consumers may be more interested in buying the product for its packaging than for the water itself - or they impulsively purchase a bottle where there was no immediate access to a tap."

I invite those of you now sporting even an MSMC water bottle to take a look at how many of those you consume each day and accumulate each week, then

each year. In a report released by the California Department of Conservation (CDOC), it is estimated that more than one billion such water beverage containers are winding up in the trash each year. Health advocates are not trying to deter people from drinking water. On the contrary, those environmentalists are merely trying to raise awareness in the eyes of the consumers, regarding the implications of even the smallest things we toss away.

Jenny K

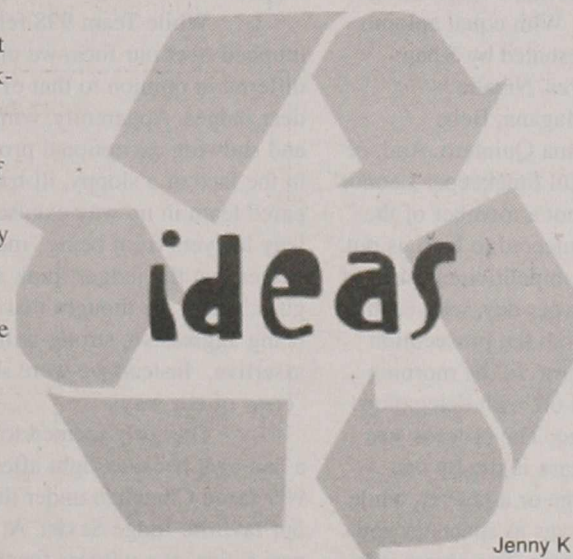
Not only does each plastic bottle you discard take 1,000 years to biodegrade, but because each container is voluminous to a certain degree, they are

rapidly overwhelming our cities' dumps.

Even more alarming is the fact that less than 5% of plastic waste is currently being recycled in the United States. Even with the trademark recycle symbol adorning the bottom of each container, most recycling plants cannot or refuse to accept certain plastics for processing because of the amount of energy and new materials needed to produce another batch of recycled plastic.

Instead, what happens is even more bottles are manufactured, using a toxic material called polyethylene terephthalate (PET). These plastic counterparts to glass bottles are much lighter and save in costs of shipping for most companies, but what is the cost to our health and the future of the environment?

While deciding to buy the next Arrowhead or Dasani, ask yourself whether or not you might just be able to refill a bottle you already own...



If something really bothers you **THAT** much, why not put it in print?
State your piece.
Write for *The Oracle*

P o e t Mock Trial Autobiography

V i s i t s

Chalon

By Marisa Smith

It is never simple to sit and hear about another man's plight in the face of adversity, but listening to Chris Abani gave it a whole new face. A large man, of big stature, Chris Abani is the type of person you'd like in your corner during a fight; but to see this man cry during a poetry reading adds depth and meaning to his work that would never reach the reader unless in a personal setting, such as this.

Reading excerpts from *Daphne's Lot* and *Graceland*, Chris Abani explained the details of his poems and how he drew on his life experiences to create these literary works of art. With each story about his imprisonment and childhood running from his home country with his family, Chris Abani brought out the missing piece between the words and the human connection.

After the poetry reading, Mr. Abani graciously provided Professor Villatoro's Creative Writing class with a question and answer session. There, Mr. Abani discussed his craft, his personal connections with his writings, and his idiosyncrasies concerning choosing just the right paper for his next literary venture. Mr. Abani's visit made *Daphne's Lot* and his other works come alive with his inflection, motions, and feelings for the readings. It was a wonderful reading and added much to the curriculum of the Creative Writing class.

continued from page 1

it like the pros. Our "Legal Eagle's Boot Camp", lead by the esteemed Dr. Boutrous, began and we were off and running once we hit the ground. Roles were assigned, strategies mapped out, teams drawn, drilling on legal terms and objections commenced, case binders were prepared, tree phones set up, affidavits memorized, and many Deli sandwiches were eaten. Winter Break swung around and we paused in our training to enjoy the holiday festivities. Spring semester began, we were back to work, and the 21st was drawing ever closer. We brushed up on our skills and stratagems; working and reworking opening arguments, directs examinations, cross examinations, witness testimonies, and closing arguments. Such was the dedication to the cause that three hardened, fall semester veterans were persuaded to make for their guest appearances at the much anticipated competition.

Finally, that fateful Saturday arrived. We assembled at the Circle promptly at 6:15 a.m., and caravanned down to the local Starbucks-- for every Legal Eagle must come properly equipped with a sufficient dosage of steamy caffeine to complete the ensemble of power suit, power heels and power strategy binder. The first day of the competition was held downtown at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. That in itself was an experience. It's fine and dandy to arrange the desks in your classroom to resemble a courtroom, but to actually be in one and present a case was an entirely different matter. And so it began.

Team 998 was expertly staffed by Sarah Bessell, Juliet Choi, Susan Lang, Montserrat Moran, Nicole Riesgo, and Jessica Trujillo. With equal aplomb Team 999 was represented by Kbaa Beck, Roxanna Flores, Natalie Hernandez, Karla Magana, Bebe Sandoval, and Adriana Quintero. And, of course, our wonderful timekeeper Leonor Pandoro, who was not a member of the class at all but volunteered to help us out. The format of the competition consists of two runs of the case per day, with each team representing both the prosecution and the defense in turn. In the morning both Teams squared off with delegations from U.C. San Diego. The process was exhilarating. Each case is run by one official, either a judge or a lawyer, while a second official serves as spectator and additional commentator. The object is to keep the proceedings as realistic as possible, with the unknown element of what strategy the other team would use. Both teams were able to hold their own and we came away with a sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment. Sure, we hadn't made a perfect score, we weren't expecting to and there's always room for improvement, but we were happy. The second round saw Team 998 facing off against Claremont-McKenna, while Team 999 duked it out with Loyola Marymount. The day ended around 6 p.m. and we went home exhausted, but

pleased, ready to make a grand slam finish the next day.

Sunday saw everyone at the Circle at 6:15 a.m. again, the necessary trip to Starbucks was made, and this time we were on our way to the USC Law School. After a good start we were eager to begin another round of intense litigation and critical thinking. However, on this particular day a great multitude of things hit the proverbial fan, and feathers were more than ruffled. Sexism is something that we all learn about, especially coming from a women's college, but we never expect that it will happen to us. You always feel that you're immune to the stereotypes and discriminations that you read about, study, and learn to identify. Sure it happens to other women, but it would never happen to you, right? A rather rude awakening showed us that this is indeed not the case, and that there is much in the world that we must fight. We faced Riverside Community College, and it was quite the experience. For both teams this was the first competition they had entered; however, we had had the chance to scrimmage beforehand due to the fact that we could field two teams. Riverside had fewer resources and unfortunately this competition was the first time that they had ever done a formal run through. In my highly biased opinion we cleaned their clock, and then some. I won't go into the details, because doing so would require more words than this article is allowed to have. However, you have our names, if you really want to know the sordid details track us down and we will be more than happy to sit down for a chat and reminisce at great length.

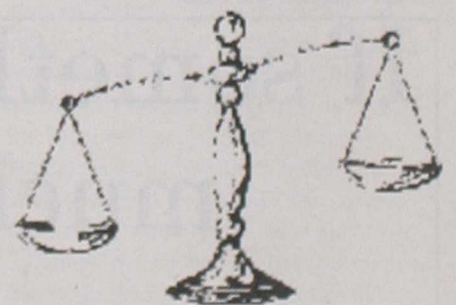
While Team 998 felt that we triumphed over our foes, we unfortunately differed in opinion to that of our dear, dear judges. Apparently, winning the case and showing exceptional professionalism in the face of a sloppy, ill-trained, unprepared team in no way excuses our young lady lawyers from being "mean" to witnesses that the judges think are "nice guys." Here we thought that we were being aggressive, strong-willed, and assertive. Instead we were shown the "error of our ways."

Our girls seemed to have pulled a bad egg, because right after lunch Team 999 faced Chapman under the scrutiny of our favorite Judge Sexist. At the time I was acting as a witness for the prosecution in our own case, but I've been told that Team 999 did a fantastic job. You'll have to ferret them out and hear more from them, but when they say they kicked butt, I know for a fact that they did. But for some reason, whenever we thought we did great His Right Honorable Sexist thought otherwise. Like the lawyers for Team 998, the girls of Team 999 thought that they went after their case with the steely-eyed determination of a fatal predator. The Judge That Everybody Loves To Hate took his comments one step further this time. He

informed the girls that "when you think you're being strong and aggressive, you're actually being mean and you're kinda being something else..." Whatever could he be referring to?

For some reason, the Judge Who Hasn't Left The Stone Age felt that his thinly veiled insults weren't enough and he continued on with his critiques. He warned Team 999 that they need to be careful as lawyers because "members of the jury may think that women are the weaker sex, and that they shouldn't be so aggressive." It seems that His Honor wasn't aware of the fact that women have experienced political disenfranchisement, unequal pay, sexism, discrimination, sexual harassment, corsets, footbindings, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, rape, serial rape, serial murder, genital mutilation, veilings, female infanticide, and the list goes on and on. We've endured all of this, and yet we still find the strength to fight back. We continue to struggle in the face of overwhelming odds, and we still say "No Sir!" They dare to think us the weaker sex?

But, I digress. All in all the class and the competition have been a wonderful experience with some minor bumps along the way. We all share a bond now, we've gone through the Trial by Fire and we all made it out to the other side together. I couldn't have asked for a better group of girls. Much credit must also go to the amazing Dr. Boutrous. She's guided, poked and prodded us to where we are today, and we mean every word when we say that we wouldn't have been able to perform half as well, had it not been for her. The class continues to meet, the competition may be over but the semester still rolls on. Now we're switching gears and we're back to Moot Court. The cases will be handed out, much highlighting will be done, and the end of the semester will see us in our power suits and heels once more. Keep an eye out for the flyers; our final presentations are open to the public. We welcome you all to join our family. We may have been the first Mount St. Mary's Mock Trial team, but we certainly won't be the last. It won't be easy, but the end result is worth the proverbial blood, sweat, and tears. That's all for now, and hopefully I'll see you in court.





THE ORACLE

IN PRINT YOURSELF ON THE WORLD

MOUNT SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE
VOL. 12 ISSUE 4
MAY 5, 2004

Spring is in the Fair

By Laarni Paras

Our Spring Carnival changed its name to Spring Fair to fit this year's theme "Meet Me at the Fair." Not only did the change evoke Judy Garland singing "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis" with parasol in hand, there were new additions to the yearly celebration. Students enjoyed standard fair foods ranging from hot dogs, sno-cones, and popcorn with mocktails from Student Health Advocacy Committee. Last year's games like tic-tac-toe, milk bottle knock over, and beanbag tosses were replaced with a rock wall, a live band from the real O.C., *Band Sold Separately* (www.bandsoldsep.com), and the now-infamous Dunk Tank.

"Why infamous?" you ask? Well, it must be because the Dunk Tank's victims and the multiple times they fell to their watery prison by the hands of students they previously thought were loyal.



Among the brave souls were Dr. Mari Wadsworth of Student Affairs; Laura Gomez of Campus Ministry; Laura Lopez and Andrea Riddervold of Residence Life; Dr. Scott Bryson of the English

Department; Dr. Tonia Symensma and Kelly Krass of the Biological Sciences; and Dr. Eric Stemp of Physical Sciences &



Mathematics. Each hit (legitimate ones only) helped ASB donate over \$200 to the Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times, which benefits children afflicted with cancer and their families.

There were other clubs that participated in giving students a grand ole time. Latinas Unidas had a ring toss with a Disney princess piñata as the target and mini-piñatas as prizes. Women for Community Medicine had the "String Thing" with prizes in urine cups (clean, we all hope). Campus Ministry threw an "Eggstravaganza". RHA painted up eager canvases at the henna booth. Phi Alpha Delta used the Presidential campaigns as the theme for their "Pin the Tail



on the Party" game with a donkey and elephant waiting to be pinned. Experiential Learning offered students the chance at sand art as the Scholar Mentor Program



challenged others at a game of "Chubby Bunny". Along with providing food and money for charity, ASB also provided a bracelet-making table. And two companies came up on the hill to advertise, *Ballys Total Fitness* and *Bank of America*.

After the long day was done and the only thing left were rainbow colored pennants flapping in the breeze and a puddle of water in the circle after being drained out of the beloved Dunk Tank, the fair was a success. The altered name was not the only thing that affirmed the saying "change is good." It was the variety of events that pleased every sense: Hearing (*Band Sold Separately*), Sight (Dunk Tank and, ahem, *Band Sold Separately*), Touch (rock wall and, ahem, pushing the button on the Dunk Tank), Smell and Taste (all the food and drinks).

-All Pictures by Rhea DeGuzman

Multi-Cultural Night: Despite Trying Times, Michael Jackson Triumphs



The girls of Pi Theta Mu celebrate



Host: Sebastian Cetina

Read about the talent and the winners of the night on page 8

An Admissions Crisis?

By Andrea Mazon

News, and rumors for that matter, spread through campus at record breaking speeds. There has been talk, or rather whispers, the last few weeks that there has been a significant increase in the number of students admitted to Chalon for this coming Fall. The more melodramatic of us, myself included, automatically pictured our beloved hill being overrun with freshman. The increase in bodies would be such that students would spill out of the classrooms into hallways and there wouldn't be enough faculty, staff, or general resources to adjust to the sudden population spurt. Our quiet, peaceful hill would be turned upside down, chaos would reign and the Mount as we have known and experienced it would cease to exist. This scenario of course, could not be farther from the truth.

In order to assuage these irrational fears and uncover the actual truth of the situation, I made an appointment with the Dean of Admissions. With questions prepared and pen in hand poised for serious note

taking, I met with Dean Kilgore. Not only did he prove welcoming, but also very forthcoming with concrete information. Some of the facts and figures he offered are as follows:

It is a natural consequence of California's current budget situation that private colleges and universities like the Mount are experiencing an increased pool of applicants. Almost every such school is facing a 20-25% admissions increase. With the budget cuts and program downsizing facing Cal State and University of California schools, counselors have been explicitly told to encourage their high school students to apply to at least one private college or university. It is more likely that incoming freshman will receive a substantial financial aid package from a private rather than state sponsored institution.

This increase in applicants quite naturally lends itself to an increase in admissions and enrollment. Yet, the degree of this increase is not so steep as to merit significant worry or concern at present. The

goal for the number of new students to enroll for the fall is 140 for the Chalon campus and 160 for Doheny. There is only a slight deviation between this goal and projected enrollment of 160 new freshmen at Chalon. Also, it is not

uncommon for the goal to be exceeded.

Last year, the enrollment for both campuses was higher than that of their goal.

It is a standard reaction for current Mount students to hear of this

increase and question whether or not admissions standards have changed or grown somehow lax of late.

Continued on page 8

IN



SIDE

THIS ISSUE

The Hummer
Revolution: Page 3
Take Back the Night
Page 5

Summer Fun
Page 6

Student Views
Page 7

MCN
Page 8

Many Thanks to Staff and Students

I don't know how many people actually read these things. I don't usually read editorials myself, that is, unless I recognize the writer. If Lisa Melou wrote an editorial, I'd read it—she's hilarious.

Yet, I believe that editorials are really the closest that non-staff members get to the behind the scenes action at *the Oracle*. It's a fast-paced world of journalistic blood, sweat and tears and every day is a new adventure. Well, at least it's an awful lot of work.

That work, fortunately, has not been shouldered by one person alone, but by an extraordinarily dedicated staff of writers, editors, and layout designers. It's difficult to explain at times why putting out an 8 page newspaper at a small college seems so overwhelming, but it involves so much more than writing articles. Suffice it to say that I deeply appreciate every single person who has contributed to *the Oracle* this year, not only my staff members, but anyone who has submitted a letter, pictures,

articles, or even just discussed the paper on campus—you are the reason we do what we do.

Of course, there are a few specific people I would like to thank: Sarah, Roberta, Marisa, Adriana, Andrea, Kerry, and Sasha for all of their brilliant writing. Special thanks to Laarni for not only her entertainment writing, but also her layout skills. Thank you also to Jenny, our editor first semester, for always putting her heart and soul into *the Oracle*. Finally, thanks to Mari Wadsworth for her support.

And so we pass the torch on to a new year; many of us are returning, others will be graduating or moving on. I am excited to announce that Dara Halperin will be the new Editor in Chief and I have great confidence that she will excel in the position. I am also glad to say that after a rocky start to the year without an advisor, we were lucky enough to add Dr. Matthew Brosamer to our little operation, and that he will be returning to the position in the

fall. With a strong returning staff, an incredibly hardworking new editor, and a dedicated advisor, I believe that the next year will be one of the greatest years the Oracle has seen in recent memory.

The opportunity to serve *the Oracle*, and the campus, as Editor in Chief has been one I will always cherish. I have been privileged enough to work with some incredible women, to see what they are capable of, and to see them doing something that they are truly passionate about. It is incredible to walk into an Oracle meeting and bring a topic to the table: every person in the room has something to say, a new approach, a different way to write about it, or a unique way to bring it to the student body's attention. This semester, though we have only had two issues, the Oracle has achieved a high standard of quality, and a commitment to representing the views and interests of students on campus. From our new design this year to our new methods, we have

been striving to raise the bar of journalism at the Mount, and I believe that it has paid off: people are taking note. And that is a credit to my staff and the students; I simply feel lucky to have witnessed it.

I will end by saying that I believe something extraordinary is happening in *the Oracle* office, and I encourage every student on campus to take part in it. Please continue to send your letters, articles, and pictures. Let us know what you are interested in. Come and be a part of the staff. I promise, you are joining some of the best writers and brightest minds on campus.

Thanks for reading, and we will see you in the fall!

—Erica Carroll
Editor in Chief

LETTERS

Cal Grant Rebuttal

Dear Editor,

When I started reading Maureen Kelley's opinion letter "Hell Hath No Fury" in the March 24 edition of *The Oracle*, she had me on her side one hundred percent. However, once she stated that Cal Grants are simply a "convenience to a sector of the population," she lost all of my respect. After reading the entire article, I became very angry that a student at my school would make such rash assumptions and hateful remarks about her peers. My roommate, Natalie Barrantes, and I fully dissected the article, trying to see things from every perspective, something Ms. Kelley should have done. Natalie said to me, "Before making such hasty judgments regarding student's financial situations, perhaps Ms. Kelley should have taken the time to find out how many of her fellow students work full or part time jobs, work for scholarships, and take out loans in order to attend school. I work 35 hours a week and carry eighteen units. I am deeply offended by her assumption."

I understand that when budget cuts are made, some programs suffer minor or massive reductions and can even shut down altogether, but to say that education is simply a "pet cause" is an appalling idea. A Cal Grant is not a "handout," it is a way that many people are able to get through school. Ms. Kelley: you say that hospital programs are more important. This may be true, but tell me, who is going to staff those hospitals and any other social welfare program when there are not enough people with college degrees because they have had to "postpone" their educational endeavors?

When Ms. Kelley says that our state has already "spent" way too much money on non-vital expenses," she is saying, in effect, that education is not important. In what world is Ms. Kelley living that education is not important, and that only those who can fully fund their education deserve to go to school?

On top of that, I highly doubt that Ms. Kelley pays her own tuition. She needs to understand that many college students do just that, without any help from their family or friends, while balancing work and

extracurricular activities. As Natalie said, "Why don't we take a look into the past for a moment? In the early 1900's, your social class defined your needs, especially for education. Is this what the future will be like? The wealthy people will be educated and those who need financial assistance will not be given the chance to reach their full potential?"

Do me a favor Ms. Kelley—the next time you complain about your family paying "megs taxes," keep in mind the huge return they receive. If anyone is paying the price with taxes, it is the middle class. Do you know the difference between you and me, Ms. Kelley? I don't mind paying my share of taxes. It is enough to know that I am helping our society develop and grow, and on top of that, help those who are less fortunate than I to get to where you and I are today. Your letter does nothing but make you sound greedy, spoiled, and ignorant.

The fact is that Ms. Kelley is making gross conjectures about us "greedy bratty children." Maybe if my rich mommy and daddy paid my way, I wouldn't have to worry about Cal Grants being cut. How's that for an assumption? Gather your facts, Ms. Kelley—your assumptions only contribute to the ignorance in our society.

Thank you,
Delvin Rose Murphy and Natalie
Barrantes

Dear Editor:

It is truly disheartening to hear people like Ms. Kelley so blatantly and with shameful joy defend Governor Schwarzenegger's budget cuts which may unfortunately include educational cuts that so many academically qualified and determined college students like me depend on. Whatever happened to being compassionate for other people's plights? Not everyone is born with a silver spoon in their mouth and have Daddy-O pay to keep those little pink toes from getting wet! I am a first year college student who by any means necessary will successfully and inevitably receive my college degree. We are not looking for handouts, nor are we

using Cal Grants to pay for drug uses, new cars, clothes or anything of the sort. We need this money to become financially independent and eventually become a productive and useful asset to society. It's called "securing our future." We are the future doctors, lawyers, scientists and even, oh no, *politricksans*, I mean politicians that very well one day be an asset to your children or your children's children. We are intelligent, academically proficient students who have the potential to earn a higher education beyond high school, but lack the funds to pay for it. Yes, we know

that this is a *privilege*, my dear Maureen, and we don't feel that we are owed this. Just in case you weren't aware or maybe you just flew in from Mars, **NEWS FLASH!!** Princess Kelley, your parents aren't the only one who pays mega taxes in this country. My parents, his parents, her parents and our ancestors have been paying taxes before your parents were born, and taxes will be paid even after your parents

continued on Page 8

THE ORACLE

oracle@msmc.la.edu

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Erica Carroll

LAYOUT EDITORS
Jenny Kane
Laarni Paras

ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Adriana Rendon-Miranda

STAFF WRITERS
Sarah Bessell
Sasha Ruiz
Roberta Brehm
Dara Halperin
Andrea Mazon
Laarni Paras
Kerry Richards
Marisa Smith

FACULTY ADVISOR
Dr. Matthew Brosamer

Editorial Policy
The Oracle is a non-profit publication created by the students of Mount Saint Mary's College. Letters to the Editor are strongly encouraged. All letters should be accompanied by full name and signature and may be edited for clarity and brevity. Unsigned letters will not be printed. Please direct all correspondence to *The Oracle* at 12001 Chalon Road, Box 112, Los Angeles, CA 90049 or via e-mail to oracle@msmc.la.edu. The telephone number is (310) 954-4083. Advertisements, commentaries, columns and political cartoons do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the paper, the college or the writer. Editorials are the opinions of the majority of the editorial staff. *The Oracle* welcomes articles and contributions by students, faculty, staff and alumni.



Special thanks:
Virginia Guevara (pictures)
Rhea DeGuzman (pictures)

What Does a Hummer Do For You?

By Jenny Kane

Hummers now seem to be everywhere on the road. Are they rapidly becoming the new suburban SUV of choice? According to Autodata, during a period of five months between July and November 2002, sales of the Hummer H1 and H2 doubled. To top it all off, customers were so eager to get their hands on these beefy all-terrain bulldozers that they were bidding more than the sticker price!

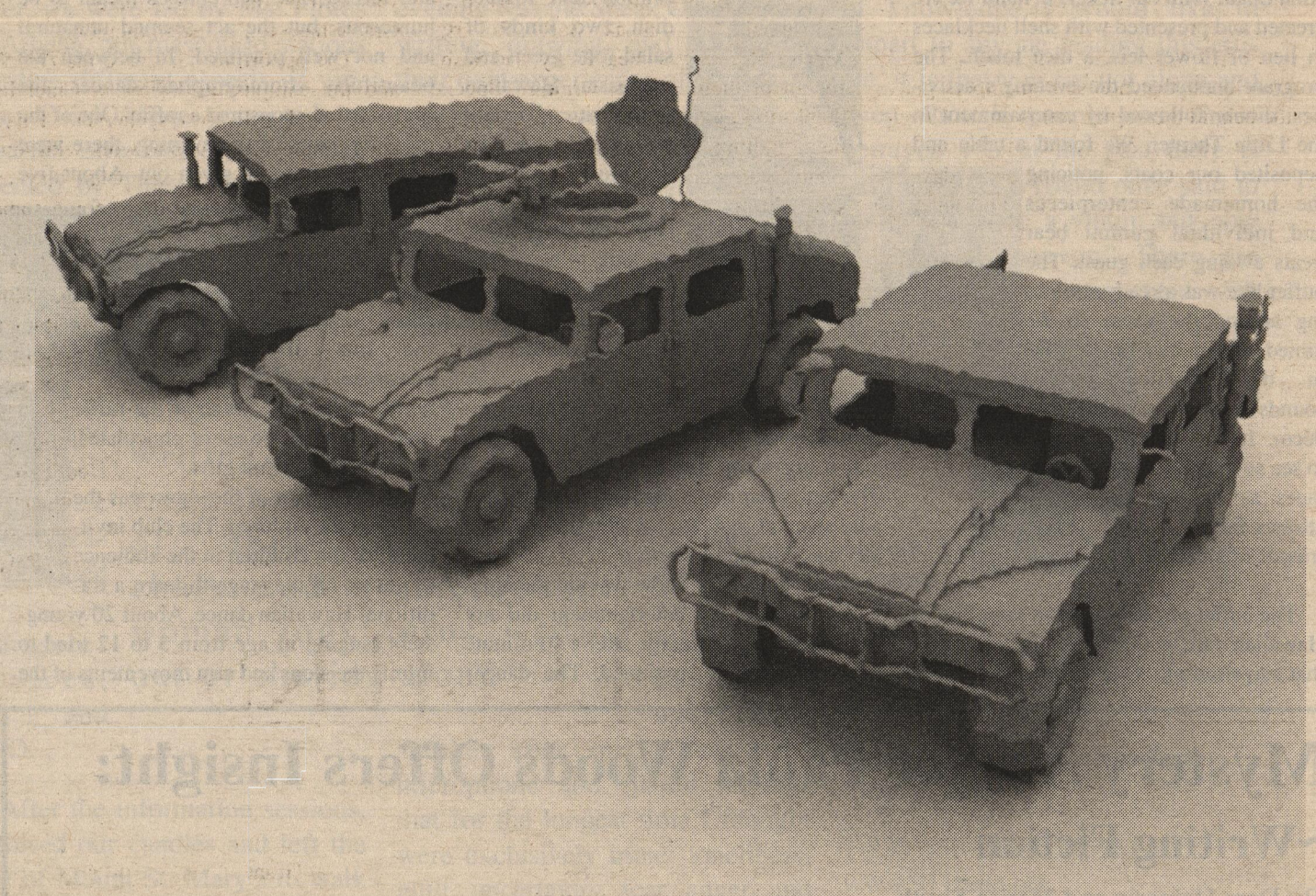
And the initial price is not something to scoff at either. Ranging anywhere from 50 grand to upwards of 120 grand, these cars are not the typical transportation choice for most of working America. However, there are a few among a rising sect of the population, choosing to overlook its lofty price point, in order to cash in on both the physical and more transparent perks of owning this super-SUV. For those who drive a hummer, whether they choose the original four-door hard top or branch off and customize smaller versions of the H2 and upcoming H3, the appeal is almost entirely cosmetic. "It's extreme in price, extreme in appearance, extreme in size and extreme in image," said Jim Hossack,

senior consultant with Auto Pacific in an article in *Star-Telegram*. The newer models have been given a traditional Hollywood facelift and most of who can be seen driving one seems to have

boughten into other status symbol, wreaking havoc on both economic and environmental fronts in the US.

Now what I want to know is where did this car come from? And why are civilians able to drive them to the grocery store while soldiers die in theirs?

The prototype model of this car dates back to 1979, when the Army announced plans to extend a contract to an American car manufacturer that could develop plans for a very specific type of vehicle, one of the highest standards for military usage. This was what the Army called its High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV). This is where the nickname Humvee comes from,



although the typical term is now hummer

In 1983 AM General was awarded a contract for 55,000 of the military vehicles and then for another 33,000 in 1989. According to my research, its use in the Gulf War is what first brought this vehicle

As the option to own these vehicles was made available to the public, the initial reaction was overwhelming. As mentioned, the cars were in high demand, especially within the first few years of its offering and with the introduction of the custom H2.

ronment. With gas at about \$2 a gallon and continuing to rise, driving a Hummer is both costly and inefficient. Most models get a mere 9 miles per gallon of gasoline. And even more to consider: these gas-guzzling SUVs are contributing to the undeniable rate of global warming and the depletion of our

fossil fuel resources.

"American drivers now burn 9 million barrels of oil a day in their cars and trucks. That's expected to grow to 12 million barrels a day by 2010 if fuel economy

"After 9/11, hummers became a cocky symbol of American greatness. Driving the biggest, baddest, least fuel-efficient car on the planet was tantamount to giving the finger to environmentalists...You could be an active home-front warrior by buying an expensive Hummer - imitating our troops in Iraq and stimulating the economy at the same time."

- Daniel Gross on NPR's *Day to Day*

heavily into the public eye. And then in July 1992 the first civilian Hummer was released, in part due to the lobbying of our new governor.

As a military transport, these vehicles are in use today in places like Iraq. One of the first things that the rioting crowds in Falluja did after they burned, dismembered and desecrated four American civilians was to set one of the American Hummers on fire. There was a picture printed in the Washington Post. I wonder what Arnold Schweinnegger thought about what might happen to the eight that he owns, if rioting teachers ever came to collect all of the funding he has been cutting in education in California.

However, as I have noticed in much of the reasoning associated with the abundance of choice in our culture, there seems to be a lack of concern or accountability associated with what we choose to do with our money. Does anyone stop to think that maybe just because we have "x" does not mean we should use, and/or buy it?

But certain considerations do not appear to be in the new American aesthetic of "greatness." Whoever is biggest wins the game for now, it may seem to some. But, just as it sounds, such reasoning is childish and begs for a slap of reason.

Those who advocate against civilian, and even military usage of such SUVs, especially Hummers appeal to both economics and envi-

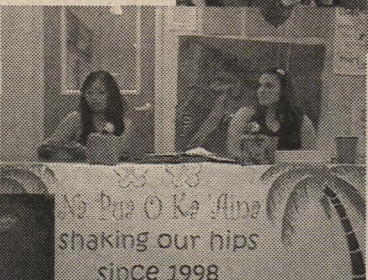
does not improve, according to the US government."

I ask again: can buying a car come down to a concern about image? Does that make economic sense? If the function is considered. If you look at the only real need here - transportation - then the only thing present is poor reasoning. If you see something else, let me know. There might be something special I don't know about...do they actually hum?

We Got Lei'd on Campus!

By Dara Halperin

The campus center was already filling up when we arrived for the Na Pua O' Ka Aina Luau. With our tickets in hand we are greeted and presented with shell necklaces in lieu of flower leis, a nice touch. The program announced the evening's activities: dinner followed by entertainment in the Little Theater. We found a table and deposited our coats, noticing the homemade centerpieces and individual gummi bear treats awaiting each guest. The buffet line was already stretching around the room so we joined it and took in the ukulele sounds and tropical décor. It was nice to see so many new faces as the luau attracts family and friends of students.



The buffet offered a unique sampling of Hawaiian fare with a diversity of dishes that surprised me. One could choose from

two kinds of chicken, shredded pork, a salmon and tomato dish, two kinds of salad (one green and one pasta), Hawaiian bread, rice, coconut pudding for dessert and four types of beverages. The vegetarian offerings were limited, however, and a lower ticket price should have been available for those guests. A member of the organization, with an explanation of the food and a big warm smile, served each dish. The ten-dollar ticket fee may have seemed a bit steep at first, but the fare (if you ate it all) was definitely worth it.

After dinner the show was set to begin. Unfortunately, the entertainment did not start on time, and finally, after a 40-minute pause, the event continued. The dances

were well rehearsed and performed, but the between the scenes acts were choppy and forced. The two emcees meant to be humorous, but the act seemed unnatural and not well practiced. In between the beautifully choreographed dances, the organization sponsored a raffle. One of the most fun parts of the evening, there were lots of prizes to be given out. About five raffle tickets were called between each act of the show, allowing lots of guests to take home extra gifts. Some of the raffle prizes included boxes of chocolates, shirts and other fun gifts.

The best part of the show was the dance of the children. The club invited all of the children in the audience to get up on the stage to learn a traditional Hawaiian dance. About 20 youngsters ranging in age from 3 to 12 tried to mimic the steps and arm movements of the

graceful dancers. A little girl about 3 years old stole this part of the show. Dancing to a tune all her own, she had the audience roaring with laughter. With an older friend she danced in the center of the stage, sometimes with her back to the audience, creating moves that had nothing to do with the show but provided the best entertainment of the night. She even tried to do a stage dive, nearly leaping into the front row, but was caught by the waist of her pants at the last second by her babysitting dance partner.



All pictures by Dara Halperin

Mystery Author Paula Woods Offers Insight: ~Writing Fiction

By Dara Halperin and Marisa Smith

Paula L. Woods, author of *Dirty Laundry*, spoke at the Mount on Tuesday, March 30th. Invited by Professor Villatoro as part of the Visiting Writer Series, she spoke to his creative writing classes and other guests about the genre of mystery and her experience with writing fiction.

Ms. Woods opened the lecture by discussing her background, the perception in literary circles of the crime novel, and mystery fiction in general. Often not considered true literature, she made the argument that mystery fiction is precisely that. Like all great writing, mysteries expose the motives of a person's heart. It asks not just the question of whodunit, but why? It is the answer to this that reveals the human struggles that intrigue us.

Through her work as an editor of mystery anthologies, Ms. Woods saw an opportunity to represent her community in a genre sorely lacking in "female detectives who are not masculine, neurotic, promiscuous, or loners." Her protagonist, Charlotte Justice definitely has her issues, but she is presented as a woman who is healing her own life while she works to solve the murder of Vicky Park.

Ms. Woods next posed the question, "what about the genre is so compelling?"

The discussion then focused on the point of view of the reader and what they take away, as observers, from the novel. She explained how

the murder mystery genre allows readers to put themselves in the midst of a dangerous situation while still remaining safe. It can transport us safely and open new worlds to us; it instructs us as we read.

Ms. Woods introduced her novel by reading the first chapter of *Dirty Laundry*. It is always a treat to be able to hear an author read from her own work. It offers a glimpse into the creative mind. Like the notes of a symphony fill a listener's soul with the emotion of its composer, the music of the written word is also infused in us as the author reads aloud. Charlotte Justice is a character that knows what she wants, where she stands, and what makes other people tick. The author's voice resonated in me as she read aloud: "[h]e narrowed his eyes at me, saw something there that made him look away." As writers and students, it offers us valuable insight into the creative process to hear how the author heard her protagonist think that line.

This insight continued into the question and answer portion of her visit. Ms. Woods replied to queries about specific points in her novel, mostly from Mr. Villatoro's Mystery Writing class. She asked those students what the stories they were writing were about and engaged them in a lively discussion of their own work. When she asked about our challenges, the topic of planning the structure of a mystery

story came up.

She spent a considerable amount of time explaining the process of character development, plot outline and the process of telling a story that starts in the middle. A murder mystery starts with a corpse, but must also show how that person came to be in their predicament. The author must refer to events that happened before the murder in order to move the story forward. This intricate weaving of plot is a tricky business and as she drew a diagram explaining this process, the students let slip those "Oh's!" and "Ah ha's!" that revealed a new level of understanding had just taken hold of them.

Created in 1999 by Professor Villatoro, the Visiting Writer's Series is an integral and inspirational part of the writing program here at The Mount. Beginning with novelist Francisco Goldman, the series has brought such noted authors as Alan Gurganus, Marilyn Chin, Cristina Garcia, Chris Abani and others to campus, according to Mr. Villatoro, "so the students can have a chance to meet folks who are adding to the 'American Canon'."

Womanhouse Film Fest Feature

By Marisa Smith

Stepping into the world of *Womanhouse*, Judy Chicago's provocative look at the role of women in the 1970's, one can see the deep effect that art had on director Johanna Demetrakas, a woman of the 60's and a self-described seeker of social justice. She found *Womanhouse* in 1972 in a funky Hollywood neighborhood, each room of the house decorated by a different female artist. With \$300 Johanna filmed the different rooms of the house, as well as meetings between the artists of the house. Due to lack of funding, Johanna was forced to put the film away (she stored it in her freezer) until she could complete it in 1974. *Womanhouse* is the brainchild of Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro. Through separate rooms of the house, each artist shows their view of women and their place in society, the most poignant room being a bathroom filled with feminine hygiene supplies. This room elicits several different reactions, and the consensus is that the room represents the secret nature of this sub-culture; the secret lives of ordinary women. The house is full of highly political art, each a discussion point for the role of women in the modern society. Commentary from visitors at the exhibit provided an extra dimension to the documentary, specifically, commentary from three average Joes who really didn't have a clue about what the art represented or what the meaning of the statement was. Why should you have gone to see this film? Marielos Zeka feels that there is "a need for feminist movies. It's a reflection of our culture."

Womanhouse represents the artistic side of the emerging feminist movement clearly with Johanna Demetrakas' film acting as the eye into this all too overlooked subculture of Vietnam-era America.

Take Back the Night

By Kerry A. Richards

According to the Rape Abuse Incest National Network, one in every six women is a victim of rape or attempted rape/sexual assault. Knowing this, I knew that night I would not be alone. The night commenced with an introduction by Florence Flores, ASB President, who provided a history of the night and our itinerary for the evening.

Take Back the Night originated in Germany as a reaction to a series of rapes, sexual assaults, and murders perpetrated against women, in effect making them afraid to go out at night. Take Back the Night is a candlelight vigil and silent march protesting violence against women. In 1978 the first Take Back the Night was held in the U.S. and today the vigils are not only held nationwide but worldwide as well. On March 31, 2004 members of Mount St. Mary's College convened at the Doheny Campus to join in the college's third presentation of Take Back the Night, sponsored by Counseling & Psychological Services.

Processing first to Mercy Chapel we received candles and joined in a prayer for those who are survivors and victims of abuse. After the

prayer, we were led by Ms. Flores and Athena, our mascot, to stations regarding different aspects of violence: Child Abuse presented by Residence Life, Domestic Violence presented by Theta Alpha Sigma, Date Rape with Drugs presented by the Black Student Union, Female Circumcision presented by Human Services, Human Trafficking presented by V o c e s Latinas, and a Self Defense demonstration provided by Commuter Services, ASB and LAPD.

After the information sessions, we raised our candles and left the gates of Mount St. Mary's to walk our neighborhood streets and reclaim the night as ours. As we walked the darkened streets, I realized the crowd of women that started off as a sprinkling of candles had grown to a stream of light bright enough to illuminate the street.

The most profound part of the

evening was the Speak Out: women writing, drawing, and vocalizing their own experiences of abuse and expressing the impact the night had on them. Armed with chalk and a microphone, women took turns writing out or sharing aloud their experiences. If you are someone who, like me, looks at statistics and thinks, "I know I'm not alone but

"the Speak Out: women writing, drawing and vocalizing their own experiences of abuse...Armed with chalk and a microphone, women took turns writing out or sharing aloud"

speaker after speaker took the microphone and shared feelings that for the longest time I thought were exclusively mine: loneliness, guilt, uncertainty, fear, anger, and strength.

I have a deep respect for each woman who attended that night showing her strength by asserting her presence, not only taking back the night but rousing her voice from the hush that abuse brings over its victims. If there is a piece

of knowledge I would like to impart to anyone reading this article, it is that you are not alone and even though people may have betrayed you in the past there is help now. As a friend once said to me, "You were a victim but now you are a survivor." There are woman and men who stand with you for support; you are not alone. Please, if you are hurting seek help and begin to take back what is rightfully yours.

Resources

*MSMC Counseling & Psychological Services:

Doheny: 213-477-2668

Chalon: 310-954-4114

*Nation Wide Assistance for Rape Victims:

1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or
www.911rape.org

*L.A. County Mental Health Crisis Line:

1-800-854-7771

*National Domestic Violence Hotline:

1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or
www.nsvrc.org

The Clothesline Project

By Sasha Ruiz

Shirts, almost dancing with the wind to a somber melody, bordered the circle Thursday, April 22nd. This Clothesline Project, organized by Dr. Dean's Psychology 186 Violence Against Women course and aided by the Department of Justice's Grant to Decrease Violence Against Women on College Campuses, was a visual display of the violence suffered by so many loved ones of those on our own college campus. Passing students eagerly decorated shirts, color-coded to display certain types of violence perpetrated against women. Sadly, it seemed that almost every student had at least one person to honor.

Many shirts were dedicated to family members who were or presently are involved in violent relationships. Some shirt had messages of hope, others of despair and frustration but all with love. Child sexual abuse and domestic violence had the most numbers represented. This painful display brought to light an image I had read and experienced myself. In *After Silence* by Nancy Venable Raine, a novel detailing her rape and recovery, she reflects on the

Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. This powerful display of human casualties impacts many, because we can finally see the destruction this war had on so many. She believes that this display "translates our collective shame and guilt into shared grief" for these actions. The Clothesline Project, though on a much smaller scale, had a similar effect. Ironically, the number of victims greatly outnumbered those killed in battle during Vietnam. For many, this display allowed us to



witness the prevalence of violence on a much more personal level. Many walked by with curiosity in their eyes, some with shock, but soon it would turn to shame. It was shame that our society has done so little to erode the framework that allows this violence to continue.

Olivia Rodriguez from Chicana Shelter Action Center spoke to a group intimate enough to share personal stories of violence about the destructive nature of domestic violence. She highlighted that violence can and does happen to any-

one. Powerful videos attested to this phenomenon. Children's screams for help for their mothers being beaten rang loud in the ears of many present: "Help! Please help my mommy." The words pierced our hearts. Images of women beaten and bruised, some murdered, were frozen in the minds of many.

This powerful presentation and event was truly an event that proves our society is simply not doing enough to protect its women from such abuse. Though we all have been taught the 'rules' to keep safe, taken a kick boxing class or two to feel a bit a more safe, or studied other preventative measures, it is simply not enough. We are not a culture that is immune to this virus of violence. There is no inoculation to prevent it or a remedy to cure it.

Summer Special:

Awesome Activities To Do Around LA

By Adriana Rendon-Miranda

The sizzling summer will be here before we know it. Many times in the summer, I have thought to myself "I'm bored." Well rest assure. I have some great places and things for you to venture out and do in Los Angeles this summer, and they're sure to be a whole lot of fun.

Have you ever seen the full city? Well how about a helicopter tour of Los Angeles? **Bravo Aviation** provides helicopter tours that can be chosen from various packages. The "Flight Above Paradise" package is a flight around the city, seeing downtown to celebrity homes, and afterwards a three-course meal is served. What a cool way to get a bird's eye view of the city.

Want to stay out of the sweltering summer heat? Why not stay cool at the ultra chic movie theater, **The Bridge Cinema De Lux**, where you feel as if you've just stepped into the world of the Jetson's? The extra costs are well worth the amenities that are

offered at The Bridge. An added bonus for those of you that are 21: grab a martini at the theater's bar before heading to go watch your flick.

With all the commotion and fast paced activities of such a booming city, try going to a meditation class at the **Khandakapala Buddhist Center** with centers located in various parts of Los Angeles, such as Santa Monica, Thousand Oaks, Pasadena, Studio City, and West Hollywood. Such a break would be calming, to say the least. Meditation can help you "experience an inner calm and relax your body and mind." The classes are easy to understand and apply to your lives.

Although you may have to go to summer school, work, and have other responsibilities, I encourage you to take time out for yourself and enjoy your summer, because before you know it will be time to come back!



Bravo Aviation

Helicopter tours and charter in Los Angeles
401 World Way LAX Heliport, Los Angeles, CA 90045
Phone: (800) 77-FLYING



The Bridge Cinema De Lux Movie Theater

6081 Center Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90045-1576
Phone: (310) 568-3375



Khandakapala Buddhist Center Meditation Center

1492 Blake Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90031
Phone: (323) 223-0610

She's Ba-ack

By Laarni Paras



Finally, the second piece to this delightful puzzle has come! Okay, so maybe all we had to do was wait less than a year (if only *Harry Potter* would follow in suit...um, I mean, *X-Men 3*), but still we were waiting to see what Q was going to make U do for this volume.

Kill Bill: Vol. 2 is loaded with the same reverence for martial arts films and westerns. Uma Thurman, who plays the Bride (her name is revealed in this installation), is still thirsting for vengeance. She is determined to cross out those who are left on her list with both her felt tip pen and Hanzo sword.

It seems as if this lady won't quit. As if fighting a knife wielding assassin, a band of masked goons and a mace-swinging schoolgirl wasn't enough, this time around she survives being shot at, being buried alive, fighting another worthy assassin despite a missing eye, and her ex-lover's (Bill -David Carradine) schemes. Sheesh!

Of course, it would not be a Quentin Tarantino movie if the plot

were not mish-mashed a bit with the help of flash-backs. We travel back through black and white film to relive the last meeting between Bill and the Bride at what seems to be her wedding. We wonder why the

scene between the two is so eerily peaceful and then we realize that this is Q at his best: his story telling has left us so tense that even while we watch, we are compelled to prepare for war.

We are delightfully enlightened on how the Bride gets her assassin skills. Her mentor, Pai Mei (Gordon Liu), in all his white-haired glory, disciplines the Bride with his rod and proverbs. One of the most laugh-inducing moments happens right when Pai Mei balances on the Bride's sword and kicks her and he says, "From here you can get an excellent view of my foot." And who could forget the whipping sounds that came from the teacher meticulously stroking his long beard?

This movie is physically taxing on the actors, but it does not simply rely on action. Uma Thurman has to be a woman bent on killing those who put her in a coma and taking her child away from her. She shows her conflict well through her fiery

spirit with moves to match. Carradine shows his craft as he portrays a manipulative man who is quick to murder out of jealousy, yet he still has the ability to love.

Vol. 2 may disappoint some viewers who were looking for more anime and even more imaginative fights of the plenty that *Vol. 1* had to offer. This one has more dialogue than the first and is by comparison slower, but by no means a less important film.

Could you watch this without watching *Kill Bill: Vol. 1*? Sure, but with the DVD out now, why not? I would recommend you watch the first one too because you be missing out on a lot of fun. It would be as if I said, "Yeah, you can use conditioner without shampoo. But you wouldn't get as much bounce."

Some Royal Advice: Rent It

By Adriana Rendon-Miranda

The Prince & Me starring Julia Stiles (*Save the Last Dance*) as Paige Morgan, and newcomer Luke Malby, as the crown prince of Denmark, Eddie is a romantic comedy. Paige is a pre-med student who has her goals and plans meticulously mapped out, whereas Eddie's perception of college in the United States is that of girls mimicking the parties seen in the *Girls Gone Wild* videos. They meet at college in Wisconsin and have completely wrong impressions of each other. These perceptions change when Paige is assigned Eddie as her lab partner and they come to help each other out. Paige's plans are derailed when fate

throws love her way. Although the movie is cute and funny, it starts to get unrealistic. Let's admit it, we have all at one time dreamt of a gasp, prince, but I would save your money and wait until it comes to your local video store.



A Look at the Film Festival

By Roberta Brehm

I first heard the news in my Majority-Minority Relations class, during the fall semester of 2002. Dr. Haldeman ended class a few minutes early to announce that the sociology department was going to offer a new course in documentary film and social justice. As an overly busy person (or so I thought), I wasn't really interested in taking *another* sociology course at the time, but she was so excited that it was impossible not to listen to her. After Dr. Haldeman finished, I had the feeling that this documentary course was not going to be an ordinary class.

The impetus for beginning a film and social justice program came from two directions. On the one hand, there was a push within the sociology department to create a stronger focus on social justice issues, and especially to give students the desire to become more involved citizens. At the same time, they would gain the tools to become more effective advocates for social change. This was in keeping with the fact that the majority of MSMC sociology majors go into advocacy-related careers, as well as with the mission of the college and the Sisters of St Joseph. At the same time, there was an interest in developing a film major in both the art and sociology departments.

The two objectives came together nicely, into a film and social justice program. According to Dr. Haldeman, there is a need to produce good filmmakers, but it is even more important that they are good advocates, interested in social justice with an education grounded in social service and moral values. Film is a powerful media with which to advocate social change—it is universal, and inspires people in a unique way. It can also educate, creating energies in people which can then be turned into action.

The art and sociology departments applied for a grant from the 3M Company to start the program. At the same time, they hired Pam Bruns, former director of Human Rights Watch in Southern California, to teach a class in documentary film and social justice for the spring semester of 2003. She not only had connections to film as a medium of advocacy, but also a lot of experience in training people to be organized advocates. This was the perfect combination needed for the job of leading the new Documentary and Social Justice class. Is it surprising that Dr.

Haldeman was excited about the course?

Wherever this course went, I knew that I wanted to be a part of it, so after a month, a few discussions with my advisor, and several revisions to my four-year plan, I was a member of that first film class. I wasn't really sure what to expect, but I was hoping that the class would merit all of the excitement. That uncertainty lasted until the first night, when the class got to the section in our syllabi that said, "The students will plan and put on a film festival of social justice films at MSMC as part of a class project."

"A film festival?" I asked myself. I wasn't even sure what a film festival was, except that it somehow involved a lot of films, and sounded like a lot of work. How were we ever going to pull this off at tiny Mount St. Mary's?

That feeling also didn't last very long as we dove right into reading about different film festivals and their purposes. We also watched a string of wonderful films and had the opportunity to listen to the filmmakers talk about their work. As the semester progressed, I became more and more eager to share with the whole Mount community what our class was learning. And I knew this excitement would be necessary to help us with all of the work needed to put on the festival. We had decided the purpose of our film festival early in the class, but it took a lot of work to do the planning.

As a class, we decided that we didn't just want to present the films—we needed to use the energy that they unleashed to help effect change in the issues at hand. Thus, we had to research ways in which people could do things to help, as well handling the details of actually putting on the event. The pressure and the excitement became more and more intense as we got closer to the night of our first film, *Afghanistan Year 1380*. Was everyone ready? Would we have enough people? Would the film get a good reception? Would everything work out all right?

We were right to be both excited and nervous. There were of course many glitches, as there will be at any event, but I doubt very many of the attendees

Continued on page 8

What Would Jesus the Homeboy Do?

By Sasha Ruiz

It seems that religion has become a selling point. A great marketing scheme. As I lay in bed overlooking the chapel, to the side of the statue of Mary, it dawned on me that Urban Outfitter's popular \$25.00 shirts of 'Jesus is my Homeboy' and 'Mary is my Homegirl' are simply selling points in our capitalist society. Are we truly sellouts to everything including religion? For this I consulted Father O'Brien, a man who I highly respect, because he strives to allow students to see that this entity we simply know as the big G.O.D as not something to be feared, but approached with curiosity and admiration. Father O'Brien believes that religion is to be respected and treated with a level of decorum. His main concern is that religion and religious statements are "tasteful". He believes that shirts with logos such as "Jesus is my Homeboy" can taunt and advertise religiosity. Though he sees no problem with people expressing themselves as they see fit he, believes that in the end it all comes down to "a matter of taste."

As always, Father O'Brien never ceases to amaze me with his insight. He was able to allow me to see that this statement declaring that one is close enough to call Jesus, an often-intimidating figure, one's homeboy could mean something much deeper. I only wish I could believe that those who model these tees are proudly declaring their comfortable relationship with Jesus. I don't see Campus Ministry or its staff wearing them. And I don't know of any other group more devout and comfortable with Jesus than them.

It may be that my upbringing, a nice little girl born to conservative Mexican Catholic parents, has me shocked at the casual nature religion has taken on. One of my best friends, half Buddhist, ¼ Jew, and a pinch of Christian to taste, but my Baptismal sister none the less, was never raised Catholic but recently was moved to discover Catholicism. Her first consultant: Father O'B. He allowed her to see that it was okay to walk into the chapel without the frilly Sunday dress and halo over her head, only to recite verses to a prayer she

could not connect to. He wanted her to develop a connection with God, a relationship, as you would with anyone else simply by conversing with him. Father O'Brien believes that when one can converse with God, "you are paying him a compliment" as you are comfortable enough to approach him.

But this casual nature may finally stiffen the fall of humanity. We will soon become God groupies versus groupies of the so-called 'devil's music' our parent's think we listen to. I find some comfort in the fact that religion, though in some ways exploited, is being brought into the casual arena for all to enjoy.

It seems that Urban Outfitters, though probably not intentionally, has started to raise our awareness about religion through fashion. I am sure that many of the thin mint blondes parading the shirts around campus are not religious fanatics, but fashion gurus, Ug boot wearers I am sure. Curiously they are proclaiming to have such a tight relationship with a higher being that they feel comfortable enough to wear it on a shirt, but too embarrassed to be seen at Sunday mass.

My main gripe with these fashion gurus gone wrong is that they are using religion, a very personal and deep issue for some of us, as a way to make a fashion statement versus a moral one. Instead of using these shirts to proclaim a spirituality that they are proud of, they are using it to seem faux faux and Ashton Kutcherish. I would love to believe that all of those gallivanting around in these cotton tees are proud Christians following a very Christian lifestyle, yet I know differently. The not so fashionable What Would Jesus Do wristbands wearers also have me a little confused, as I often see them holding a cigarette in the same hand adorned by this W.W.J.D bracelet. And I have a feeling Jesus would not like that. I don't think he was a smoker. I think instead of smoking, Jesus would advise you to go to church and quit using his image, name or sacredness to make fashion statements.

Continued on page 8

Washington Post Article Sparks Compassion and Appreciation

By Dara Halperin

I sat at my computer on a sunny, warm Sunday morning with my cup of coffee and an unappreciated sense of security, scanning the news on my Yahoo homepage. It was the kind of headline that I usually avoid, graphic and unsettling: "Children of Rape Remind of Rwandan Genocide". I was drawn to slide the mouse over that headline, like the planchette of an ouija board game, moving without direction, revealing the unexpected.

The article detailed the story of Muhayimana, a 30-year-old woman who had been kidnapped and forced to be the sex slave of the Hutu militia in her native Rwanda. Like an estimated 250,000 women in her country, she endured the repeated rapes and bore two of the more than 10,000 children that came of them. She was a nice girl before her imprisonment, a virgin. After three years of gang rapes she emerged with what Rwandans

call the "children of bad memories" and AIDS. After all of that suffering it touched the deepest part of me when "she said that her greatest fear is not death, but dying before she can adequately express to her children where they came from, and how she came to love them." I couldn't imagine the depth of her pain. What if I had been born in Rwanda instead of Van Nuys? I could have been her, and then I wondered, what would I tell my children?

I knew about the civil war in Rwanda but what could I do about it? It wasn't my struggle, it wasn't my people; I was wrong. With all of the horrible wars that I have seen remnants of through the tears of friends and relations that lived through them, I can't constantly feel the pain of the sufferers of too many wars fought in my lifetime. It would be too much. So I mostly avoid these stories of war and its terror.

As a child I met and spoke to

Holocaust survivors, the people of my father's ancestry. They told me the stories of their long, cold torture. My parents' friends spoke of being terrified in the jungles of Vietnam and my father of being drafted during the Korean conflict, willing to do almost anything to avoid being sent to the front.

The first friend I made in junior high had just escaped the death squads of early 1980's El Salvador. She told me her account of hiding in the jungle to avoid them and how she had to literally run away from her village in a desperate fleeing for her life and the struggle it was to make it into the United States. When I was worried about getting my hair to look like Madonna's, she prayed every day, thanking God for her deliverance.

I had friends from my class who went to the Gulf War, the first my generation fought in and their brothers who had been

in Granada and Somalia. Even after the shock of September 11th, I never felt unsafe. I knew about wars, read about them, and learned about them in the classroom, but I tried to not ever think about it. It was something that happened to other people in far away places. In the scope of the brotherhood of humanity, I had failed them and myself.

It was just this morning that somehow I clicked the left button on my mouse and entered Muhayimana's world. I let the tears run down my cheeks as I read, realizing that this woman could be my little sister. She is three years younger than me. I couldn't accept knowing her story and not do something about it. As a student pursuing my dreams of being a writer and educator, I opened a word document to share with all of you what her

Continued on page 8

Multi-Cultural Night

By Sarah Bessell

We danced, we sang, we joked, we had a good time. This year's Multi-Cultural Night has been one of the highlights of the season, producing high caliber acts that awed and amazed. Sebastian Cetina kicked off the night as emcee, and the fun began. A variety of dances from all types of genres dazzled and entertained the crowd. Guest performances from the University of Judaism brought fresh faces and acts. Three brave individuals stepped up to the mike and sang their hearts out. There was a tense moment at the end of the

RHA: 2nd Place



Champions



Our Judges



Latinas Unidas



Na Pua O' Ka Aina



Pi Theta Mu

show as the judge's scores were tallied, but finally the winners

were announced! AACW placed third for their rousing dance med-

ley, RHA placed second for their hilarious tribute to the eighties, and Pi Theta Mu grooved to the tunes of Michael Jackson to defend their reign as MCN champion. All in all it was an evening where the students could kick back and enjoy themselves. Special thanks must be given to Virginia Guevara, Multi-Cultural Night Chair, who entered the position in the spring and pulled off an amazing show. This show gets better and better every year! So don't miss the next installment: same Bat-time, same Bat-channel! See you next year!

CONTINUED FROM...

An Admissions Crisis?

By Andrea Mazon
continued from page 1

There is concern that the academic and intellectual reputation of the school will be lowered or otherwise denigrated by this influx of new students. This, however, is not the case. The admissions standards have not in any way been lessened. In fact, the larger pool of applicants enables the college to be even more selective. The overall academic bar will more than likely be raised. A testament to this possibility is the fact that the academic index of those admitted for the fall is higher than the previous year's.

The rumored admissions crisis is exactly that, a rumor. It is true that admission is up 40% for the fall. Yet, it still remains to be seen how many of those admitted will be actually enrolled. May 1st is the official commitment deadline. Those fall hopefuls who have not submitted their deposit or completed the necessary forms by then may run the risk of having their status revoked. The implementation of this measure is a decision for the President's cabinet based on the Admissions Report. Although it may indeed prove unnecessary, it is assuring to know that means of stabilizing the incoming population do in fact exist.

Cal Grant Rebuttal

Continued from page 2

are long gone. Therefore, I think you need to reconsider your position about being turned off any anyone who thinks they deserve the money that someone else has worked hard for. I can see your point if we all were earning "D's" and "F's" and not putting the Cal Grant to good use, but that is not the case. So sorry, your 'Highness,' we will not bow obsequiously today before you and your parents and reign kisses on your precious Gucci's (or fill in the _____), and thank Almighty God for blessing us with Lord Kelley and the Mrs.

Don't think for a second that all we do is depend on Cal Grants to fund our education. I also work for my tuition, take out loans, earn scholarships and do whatever needs to be done to higher my education, thank you very much. Postponing school is definitely not an option, so you can drop that thought! The same reason that you are here is the same reason why the rest of us are here. I feel that any help is a blessing, not a handout. I was taught that with hard work and determination you can achieve whatever you want. At the end of the day, I can honestly feel good knowing that I've earned my degree and that it was well deserved. I was going to say that I feel sorry for your parents for raising such an insensitive young woman like yourself, but then there's this saying that goes "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree", so.....Anyhoo, to the person that created the effigy of Gov. Schwarzenegger, don't knock them for expressing themselves, after all, haven't you?! If you call them an ignoramus, then what do you call yourself? I say, "If the shoe fits, well, you know the rest.

Here's one to think on: You say "Hell hath no fury", I say, "May God have mercy" on you and yours that you're never put in a position to where you have to cross over from the elite to "penury street" and stand in line at 'Mission de Schwarzenegger's' to "eat" your fill from the soup of the day. (Gasp!) Water please!!

Today's Soup:

Cal Grant

Hurry Princess, *Budget cuts coming soon!*

Tiffany McGrew

tiffmcgr@msmc.la.edu or caramel-drop2003@yahoo.com

A Look at the Film Festival

By Roberta Brehm
Continued from page 7

noticed in the wake of the excitement generated by the event. The Little Theater was filled to overflowing, and there were still more people that could not get in. After the film, the response was overwhelming- the petition that we circulated got about 250 signatures that night, and another 100 at the table we set up the next week in the Little Theater Foyer. Obviously, this film, and the next one we screened as well, were a huge success.

Later, the grant money from the 3M Company came in to play, and a film series was started by the art and sociology departments. This film series has included the 2nd Annual Human Rights Film Festival, which was organized by a board of students who were in the original documentary class and the following semester's Human Rights and Advocacy class. This year, the films offered were *Senorita Extraviada*, about the killings of women in Juárez, Mexico, and *Juvis*, a film on the juvenile justice system in California.

Rebecca Levin, a junior student, told me this about her *Juvis* experience: "It made me and other students really feel how unfair the justice system is to minors. I never knew that before, and it gave me a sense of sadness, but I was also glad that I was better informed."

In the tradition of our first film festival, the two films were a huge success- both were packed to capacity and over, and the audiences afterwards signed petitions and offered their time to help with the issues in large numbers.

The sociology department is now in the process of planning a second offering of the original Documentary and Social Justice Course, which will be offered in Fall 2004. Pam Bruns will be returning to teach this class, which will help to plan the 3rd MSMC Human Rights Film Festival.

We are also getting ready to say goodbye to several of our film festival advisory board members, who will be graduating this May.

What Would Jesus the Homeboy Do?

By Sasha Ruiz
Continued from page 7

I am a little perplexed that in a world at war with itself, *Passion of the Christ* is at the top of the box office with no end in sight, "Jesus is my Homeboy" shirts are the evermore-popular fashion statement, and Mary's Chapel has become more of a study hall than Coe Library. We have come a long way from kissing the rings on the hands of bishops, not making eye contact with priests out of respect and having mass in Latin. But has this informality gone too far? Is fashion more important than the sacredness of religion? It may be for some.

Washington Post Article Sparks Compassion and Appreciation

By Dara Halperin
continued from page 7

story taught me. That was what I could do. I could also be thankful for where I was and the many blessings I have in my life every day. I e-mailed the story to everyone I care about, telling them how much I appreciate their friendship.

I am reminded this morning that compassion can enrich life beyond all our expectations. On those days when I am frustrated, fed up, depressed and down-right feeling sorry for myself, I hope I remember Muhayimana. When finals are breathing down my neck and the traffic is gridlocked and I think I can't handle it anymore, I want to remember her and readjust my perspective to include the entirety of humanity.

